DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 116 490 FL 007 368

TITLE Testing the Reading Ability of Cambodians. General Information Series, No. 7. Indochinese Refugee Education Guides.
INSTITUTION Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 75
NOTE 8p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS Alphabets; *Cambodian; *Diagnostic Tests; Indochinese; *Language Tests; Oral Reading; *Reading Ability; Reading Materials; Reading Skills; Reading Speed; *Reading Tests; Refugees; Romanization
IDENTIFIERS *Khmer

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this bulletin is to provide the American educator or sponsor with a set of reading passages in Khmer (the language spoken in Cambodia), so that he will have some means of determining whether or not his Cambodian students can read Khmer. Three short passages have been selected, each given in the Khmer alphabet and in its romanized translation: (1) a passage from an elementary school textbook; (2) a passage from a secondary school textbook; and (3) for adults, a passage from a Cambodian newspaper. Instructions, to read the passage slowly out loud, are also given in Khmer. The American educator or sponsor can give the appropriate passage to his Cambodian student or friend, and can follow the transliteration as the Cambodian reads the passage. In this way he can determine whether the Cambodian can read, and also get a rough idea of his speed and fluency. Notes on the Khmer alphabet and on the transliteration are also provided to aid in the use of this guide. (Author/TL)

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Indochinese Refugee Education Guides

#7

GENERAL INFORMATION SERIES: Testing the Reading Ability of Cambodians

The purpose of this bulletin is to provide the American educator or sponsor with a set of reading passages in Khmer (the language spoken in Cambodia), so that he will have some means -- however crude -- of determining whether or not his Cambodian students can read Khmer. This is often a serious problem: in most areas of the United States, materials in the Khmer alphabet are completely unavailable; as a result, the Cambodian child -- or adult -- who cannot speak English has no way of demonstrating his ability to read Khmer.

We have selected three short passages to include in this bulletin: one taken from an elementary school textbook, one from a secondary school textbook, and one from a newspaper. On the following pages, we have reproduced these passages, each with instructions in Khmer to read the passage slowly out loud. We have also provided transliterations (the spoken language rewritten in the Roman alphabet) for each passage.

The American educator or sponsor can give the appropriate passage to his Cambodian student or friend, and can follow the transliteration as the Cambodian reads the passage. In this way he can determine whether the Cambodian can read, and also get a rough idea of his speed and fluency.

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A note on the Khmer alphabet

As can be seen, the Khmer alphabet differs considerably from the Latin alphabet in the shape of individual letters. It also differs from

the Latin in that the letters do not necessarily occur in the linear order which corresponds to the order of the sounds they represent. Spaces are placed between phrases of a sentence, rather than between words, and the punctuation mark corresponding to our period is the symbol ។. Despite the considerable differences between the Khmer and English alphabets, they function the same way: by and large a particular written symbol represents a particular sound of the language. So even though a child who can read Khmer must be taught the English alphabet and sound-letter correspondences from scratch, he is nonetheless in a different position from the child who cannot read at all: he already has the fundamental abilities necessary for reading, such as eye-hand coordination and audio and visual perception and memory, and does not need to have these developed.

A note on the transliterations

The transliterations provided here are solely for the purpose of enabling the American with no background in Khmer or phonetics to follow the passages as they are read. For this reason, we have "cheated" on the transliterations (in fact, they are halfway between transliterations and broad phonetic transcriptions); we have occasionally used letters which represent what the American will hear, rather than what the Cambodian will produce. Those unfamiliar symbols which we had to use (Khmer has several more vowels than English has vowel symbols!) are explained below:

Symbol	Sound
ē	as in English 'beet'
ā	" 'bait'
ă	" 'bat'
ī	" 'bite'
ə	" 'but'
ŭ	" 'roses' in normal speech
ū	" 'boot'
ō	" 'boat'
ɔ	" 'bought'
ʔ	as in the middle sound of 'uh-uh'
p', t', k'	English p, t, or k with a strong puff of air following it

1. Elementary: passage from elementary school textbook:

សូមរៀនរឿងនេះឲ្យច្បាស់ ហើយឆ្លើយភ្លាម ហើយឲ្យលឿនៗ ។

រឿងបងប្អូនប្រុសបីនាក់

ពីព្រេងនាយ មានជាង
ឈើម្នាក់អាស្រ័យនៅ ស្រុកតាគី
ខេត្តតាកែវ ។ គាត់ប៊ុនប្រសប់
ខាងធ្វើ តុ ទូ ឥតបានគ្រូប្រៀច
បង្ហាត់នៅរាប់ឆ្នាំ ចានចូល
មកហូលសំណាងដៃគាត់ តុកដារធ្វើ
ដាំណែកលេងគ្រប់គ្នា ។

ជាងនេះបានផ្ទះបីខ្នង លំអ
ដោយដើមក្រូច ស្វាយ ផ្លែង ស្វា
សង់រើទួលហួយ កណ្តាលវាល
ស្រែ គួរជាទីបន្ទោរម្យយ៉ាងស្រែលង ។ គាត់រស់នៅជាមួយកូនប្រុសបី
នាក់ ពីបានមានមៅ ហើយចេះស្តាប់ដំបូន្មានគាត់ផង ។ តែនៅរអ៊ន់ចិត្តគិង
ភាសនាគាត់ ដោយតាំងពីក្មួចមក គាត់មិនដែលធ្វើដំណើរមើលស្រុកទេស
គេម្តងណាសោះ ។

2. Secondary: passage from secondary school textbook:

សូមអានសៀវភៅនេះឲ្យច្បាស់ហើយឲ្យយឺតៗ។

រឿងព្រេងប្រធាំងនឹងរបបផ្តាច់ខ្លួនពុកក្មេក

ដោយត្រកូលខ្លះ មានកូនក្រមុំ ហើយតាមឮថាប់ប្តុរស
ណាដែលចង់បានកូនក្រមុំគេនោះ ត្រូវទៅនោមរ៉ែផ្តាច់ចិត្ត
ឪពុកម្តាយក្មេក មួយថ្នាំតត្នោ ថ្ងៃបីថ្នាំកំមាន ដើម្បីឲ្យគេ
សង្កិនថ្នាក់ការយាយខ្លួន ។ ឪពុកម្តាយក្មេកខ្លះ
ដែលមានចំណងស្អប់ កំមិនជាតិងរើណាស់ណា ការមើ
ឃើញថា កូនប្រុសាចេះធ្វើការដោយខ្លួនឯងហ្នឹង មិនចេះ
ស៊ីផឹកដើរលេងផ្តេសផ្តាសជាដើម កំព្រមរៀបការឲ្យទៅ ។

3. Adult: passage from a Cambodian newspaper:

សូមអធិស្ឋានឱ្យខ្ញុំ ហើយឱ្យខ្ញុំមិន

ដោយថ្ងៃអាទិត្យ ៨ មីនា ១៩៨៣ ប្រៀបដូច្នេះ ខាងបាតុកម្មច្រួយ ដែលខាងបក្សជារួចរាយខាង ដែលគេសង្កេតឃើញការត្រៀមជាធំស្ងាត់ បានចូលសម្រុកខាយកំទេចគ្រួចចិញរាងចិលលក់ផ្លូរនៅក្នុងផ្សារត្រី ផ្ទះហាងចំបាប់គេទៀត ។

ជំហ្មាមៀង ក្បួនបាតុកវែលណាត់គ្នាខាងៗ បានផ្ទួចកុំគ្នានៅរាជធានីសាលារៀនចិត ប្រវែងការម៉ោង៨ត្រឹក ។ ប៉ុះផ្ទួចកុំគ្នាបានត្រៀនហើយ ក្នុកបាតុកទៅដែលនោះបានជើរតាក្បួនគ្នាច្រួយ សម្រុកទៅក្នុកផ្សារត្រី រួចចាប់ខ្យែកំទេចគ្រួចចិញរាងចែងច្រាយ ដែលខាងឈ្លួញចិលលក់ត្រៀងរួចភោរចរិភោគខ្លួចខ្លួមៃម៉ាកដំណាំ ។

Transliterations

Passage from elementary school textbook:

rɨəngbɔngpʔɔ̃nprɔ̃hbǎnyɛ̃ək

pɛ̃prǎngnɛ̃əy mɛ̃ənjɛ̃əngchəɨmnɛk ǎsrīynəūsrɔ̃kbɔtɛ̃k'ĭttǎkīv. kɔ̃atpenprɔsɔpk'ǎngtwəɨ to? tū etmɛ̃ənkūprɔdɔ̃tmnūhnəuroabyɔ̃t bǎnjɔ̃lmaūjūəlsamnǎdīykoat tūkchɛ̃əkǎdamnīlsəngkrɔ̃pk'nɛ̃ə.

jɛ̃əngnɛ̃hmɛ̃ənp'tɛ̃əhbɛ̃k'nɔng lɔ̃m?ɔdauydǎəmkrɔ̃t swǎy dɔ̃ng slǎ sɔngləɨtūəlmūəy kndɔlvɛ̃əlsrī kūəchɛ̃ətɛ̃mnɔ̃rɔ̃myǎngkrīylǎng. koatrɔ̃hnəūjɛ̃əmūəykɔ̃nprɔ̃hbǎnɛ̃ək dɔmɛ̃ənmɛ̃ədmɔam hǎəychīhsdǎbdɔambɔ̃nmɛ̃ənkɔaʔp'ɔng. tīnəuʔɔnjetnɨngvɛ̃əssnǎkoat dauytǎngpɛ̃tɔ̃tmau koatmɛ̃ndīltwəɨdɔamnǎəməɨlsrɔ̃ktehkǎmdɔngnǎsɔh.

Passage from secondary school textbook:

rɨəngprǎngprɔchǎngnɨngrɔ̃bɔbp'koabəupūkk'māk

dauytrɔkɔ̃lk'lǎh mɛ̃ənkɔ̃nkrɔmūm hǎəytǎmt'loabbɔ̃rɔhnǎdīljɔng-bǎnkɔ̃nkrɔmūmkǎnūh trautaunauboamrǎəp'koabjetʔaupūkmdǎyk'mākmūəy-chnǎmpɛ̃chnǎmrɨɨbǎchnāmkɔmɛ̃ən dǎəmbāauykǎsɔngkātrɨkpɛ̃əmɛ̃əyɛ̃ətrɔ̃b-ɔhk'luən. aupūkmdǎyk'mākk'lǎhdīlmɛ̃ənbomnɔnglɔʔɔ kɔmɛ̄njɛ̃ətəng-rəngnāhnǎ kǎlbǎək'əɨnyt'ǎ kɔ̃nprɔsǎjīhtwəɨkǎdauyauhsǎ mɔ̄njīhsɛ̄p'ɨkdɨəlǎngp'dāhp'dāhjɛ̃ədāəm kɔprɔ̃mrɛ̃əbkǎauytau.

Passage from newspaper:

nəuprɨkt'ngīyătēttēbūənmēnămuəypoanprămbuənrōyjetsəbbā.
mselmngīnʔn mēənbătto?kămmuəy dīlmēənmnūhjēəjrāənrōynēk
dīlkāsɔngkātk'əɨnyp'ēəkjrăənjēənē?set bănnoamk'nēəjōlsoamrōk-
vēəykoamtăttōbnəngrēənjenlōkdōnəuk'nōngp'sătrā
p'tēəhhăngt'oamt'oammdɔngtēət.

doambōnglăəng kbuənbătto?kɔdīlnătk'nēəjēəmūn
bănjuəbjūmk'nēənəu?ătātă?sălărēənjen ɹrəhīljēɔmaungprămbāprɨk.
lūhjūəbjūmknēəbănjrăənhăəy puəkbătto?kɔtăngnūhbăndăəjēəkbūənjālsoam-
rōktəuk'nōngp'sătră rūətjăbvēəykoamtēttōbnɨngrēəntenglăy
dīlmēənchmūəɲyjenlūəkkrɨəng?ɔppăkp'ōkbɔrē?p'ōkk't'ātk't'emyăngdoam-
noam.